

Mr Granger and the elections

By *Stabroek News* On March 14, 2020 @ 2:01 am In Editorial |

Given the outpouring of revulsion yesterday from the Western countries and local and international observer groups about the deceptions unremittingly employed by Returning Officer for Region Four Clairmont Mingo in his second attempt at tabulation, there is no more space for denial of the fact that the March 2 general elections are being rigged before our eyes and in the crudest way.

So incensed was the Organisation of American States (OAS) observer mission about the Region Four tabulation that it announced it was leaving the country and a report would be prepared for the OAS Secretary General. The US, the UK, the EU and Canada took the extraordinary step of warning that Guyana faced isolation while three other major observer groups the Commonwealth, the EU and the Carter Center voiced deep concern at the "continued lack of transparency in the ascertainment of results for Region 4".

The Commonwealth Secretary General Patricia Scotland in a separate statement warned that the failure to conclude the Region Four count in accordance with the Chief Justice's ruling on Wednesday would constitute a serious violation of the values of the body.

Yet, in all of this, caretaker President Mr David Granger has maintained a stony, studied incuriosity about all of the credible concerns raised that the Region Four vote is being fiddled to give APNU+AFC an artificial and hollow victory. There has not been a single utterance by the President evincing any concern that the Region Four result that was declared for his coalition on March 5th, and which was finally completed yesterday based on an order by the Chief Justice, might be fixed. Not once did he send any of his senior people to investigate the possibility of a fraudulent count for Region Four. The only notable presence was to enable counting agent Volda Lawrence to controversially attest to the March 5th declaration which was nullified on Wednesday by the Chief Justice.

In the meanwhile, Mr Granger uttered a series of inane statements about the elections process to various observers here and visiting CARICOM leaders to the effect that he never doubted GECOM's capacity to do its job. Mr Granger's unwillingness to investigate or countenance the possibility that elections are being rigged strongly suggest that he expects to be the beneficiary of this grotesque act and is just biding his time before a swearing-in.

If a long view is taken of the period that Mr Granger held the presidency a clear pattern emerges: he is intent on not handing over power. His rejection of three lists of candidates from the Opposition Leader for the Chairmanship of the Guyana Elections Commission (GECOM) was the clearest sign that mischief was afoot. After embarking on dialogue with the Opposition Leader following the rejection of the third list, Mr Granger suddenly proceeded to make the unilateral appointment of Justice (ret'd) James Patterson, an octogenarian, as GECOM Chairman even though his government had forced two younger, former senior jurists from their posts on the ground of their age. GECOM, and its running of general elections, had effectively been captured by the APNU+AFC administration.

Even after the Caribbean Court of Justice (CCJ) ruled that Mr Patterson's appointment was unconstitutional, Mr Granger continued to reject worthy candidates until he was presented with the name of Justice (ret'd) Claudette Singh who he readily accepted and whose role in this current electoral fiasco has raised serious questions.

Following the successful December 21, 2018 motion of no confidence against his government, President Granger defied the constitution using the courts to the maximum even though the arguments were thinner than papery onion skin. And even when the CCJ comprehensively rejected Mr Granger's arguments on the motion of no confidence he prevaricated and delayed, all the while incredulously casting himself as beyond reproach.

Whereas the general elections should have finally been held in September last year, with the assistance of the GECOM Chair, Justice Singh, Mr Granger was able to gain an extension to March 2020. And now that the results are out, Mr Granger and his loyalists are waiting to profit off of apparently rigged numbers for Region Four which have been surprisingly sedulously championed by Mr Mingo despite widespread condemnation as the figures appear to have been fixed and party agents and observers have not been able to inspect them.

Those figures may now proceed to be accepted by Chief Election Officer Keith Lowenfield, another shadowy player in this electoral deception, before being forwarded to a GECOM meeting for final approval at which point Justice Singh will face a stark choice.

For the avoidance of doubt, it must be clear to Mr Granger that were he to be sworn in as President on these debased results he and his regime would be pariahs both here and abroad. He would gain no recognition but would instead invite dissent across a broad range of platforms and forums. A stolen election will become a veritable nightmare for him and those who benefit from this shameful rigging.

URL to article: <https://www.stabroeknews.com/2020/03/14/opinion/editorial/mr-granger-and-the-elections/>

© 1985 - 2019 Stabroek News. All rights reserved.